

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
25 January 1963

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Prospects for the 1963 Cuban Sugar Crop

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1. From an analysis of a variety of available information, including the public statements of Castro regime leaders themselves, we estimate that the 1963 Cuban sugar crop will amount to somewhat less than last year's poor crop of 4.8 million metric tons. How much less Cuba will produce this year depends on a number of variable factors, including the weather, the number and efficiency of the sugar workers involved, and the regime's degree of success in maintaining its largely worn-out sugar mill machinery in an operational status.

The island's normal average production in the period 1957-1961 was about 6 million metric tons.

2. Reasons for the expected short crop this year include the diversion of former cane lands to other uses in the last two or three years; the failure of the regime to devote enough attention to new planting and fertilization in those years; the severe drought of 1962; and the damaging of the cane by inexperienced cutters in the last two harvests. Che Guevara, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, and Cuban sugar industry officials have admitted that the regime has made serious mistakes in the management of the sugar industry. The most serious of these errors have been the de-emphasis of cane cultivation in the interests of agricultural diversification and industrialization, and the regime's failure to eliminate agricultural disorganization. In recognition of these mistakes, intensive efforts were begun as early as last summer to bring in a

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crop of at least 6.5 million tons in the 1964 sugar season. This program is also behind schedule; last year, according to a Cuban broadcast of 19 January, the regime reached only 83.4 percent of its goal for planting new cane (i.e. cane which will mature for the 1964 crop). Another question mark in both this year's and next year's production is the degree of success Cuba will achieve in its current efforts to develop and use automatic cane cutting and loading machinery.

3. This year's harvest is just beginning to get well under way. Only 50 of Cuba's 152 operational sugar mills had begun grinding by 22 January, according to Radio Havana. Cuban officials are already urging the populace to "volunteer" their services in the canefields.

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